

# A SEASONABLE WARNING TO THE Commons of England;

Discovering to them

Their *Present Danger*, and the only means of *Escaping* it, to be by a Prudent Choice of *old English Spirits*, to serve their *King* and *Countrey* in the *Approaching Parliament*.

**L**ET my real Zeal atone my seeming Presumption, if I, who am a part, though but a mean part of you, do humbly offer a Word of Advice to you; If the Members united may submissively advise their Head, I hope a single Member may Jog its Fellows, and mind them of their Danger and Duty. If you be happy, I shall share in your happiness; and if you sink, it will be my lot to sink with you.

I dare, without Vanity, profess, I have so much *old English blood* still running in my Veins, as to scorn to out-live the wreck of my Native Countrey, and had rather sink in the Publick Bottom, than by a base Subterfuge, save my self in the Boat; I have no right to sit at the Helm, I have no skill to manage the Tackling, yet let me descry a Rock upon which our Common Interest is ready to be dash't in pieces.

A Dumb Son once spoke, when the Sword was at his Father's Throat, and can I be silent when a secret Dagger is ready to be sheath'd in my Mother's Bowels? The gagling of a Goose (say they) once saved Rome, from the Surprizal of the French; Let not then wholsom Counsel be despised from a Contemptible hand, which may possibly save England from the Designs both of Rome and France.

There are many things that are importunate with me, to be so with you; and whilst these important Matters sound in my ears, I must Eccho them faithfully to yours.

1. I observe that your Friends and Enemies are agreed in this one point (perhaps 'tis the first time that ever they were, and the last that ever they will) That you have but one Throw more for your All: If you throw it ill; your Enemies are resolv'd you shall never throw again for it; If well, your Friends hope you shall never need: 'Tis a Critical Moment: Upon your well, or ill Choosing, depends your well, or ill Being; and you had need do that well, which you must never do but once; your Fate will not suffer you to Offend twice in this one particular. I once stood by with trembling, to see the issue of two Condemned Persons throwing Dice for their Lives; I hope you will therefore excuse my concerned Fears, when the Die must be cast for my own too.

2. Such is the happy Constitution, and frame of your Government, so prudently, so strongly have your many Ancestors secured Property and Liberty (rescued by Inches out of the Hands of Encroaching Violence) that you can never be Ruin'd, unless you become the Authors of your own Ruin; you cannot be Enslav'd; but with Chains of your own making. As you are never undone, till you are undone by a Law, so you can never be undone by a Law, till you chuse the undoing Legislators; And will it not be an aggravation of your misery, that your selves have made your selves miserable? Will not your Enemies add Scorn to their Cruelty, and pretend Justice for both, when they can plead, That they had never trampled on your Heads, had you not laid them on the ground? And will not your Friends and Enemies abroad, the one with pity, the other with Scorn, object it to you, O England, thou hast destroyed thy self; whom all the World could not otherwise have destroyed?

3. And you must consider, that they whom you choose will represent your Qualities, as well as your Persons; And if you send us up a false Glass, it will represent you with an ugly Face; you have hitherto had the repute of an Ancient, and Grave People; but if you choose raw Saplings, green Heads, unexperienc'd Children, the World will judge of you as they once did of the Grecians, That you were either always Children, or are grown twice Children; you have formerly had the Character of a Sober, Temperate Nation, but if you chuse Drunkards to represent you, they will conclude that you are all Drunk; and it has sometimes been your glory, that you were a Generous People, but if you send up a company of sordid, saleable, mercenary Souls to represent (or rather to betray) you, you will forfeit that Glory, and the World will judge that you your selves were Mercenary.

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4. Upon what terms our *Civil and Religious Liberties* now stand, your own *Fears*, which I perceive are grown *Universal*, by this time have informed you, what brisk Attempts have been made upon Both you know; what gallant *Essays* the late *House of Commons* have made to Secure both, you must thankfully own; how your *Expectations* have been frustrated, your *Hopes* blasted, you feelingly bewail; by what *Counsels* you have been defeated, in the Dissolution of *Parliaments*, you cannot be ignorant; and that the *Remedy* of all these *Evils* is in, and from your selves (under God) there needs no proof; what an *Excellent Spirit* was poured out upon you in your last *Elections*, we all admire. That you may keep up the same Spirit, is the *Hope* of those that Love you, the *Terrour* of those that Hate you, and the onely *Design* of this *Humble Address*; wherein, that you may be directed, I shall briefly and plainly, 1. Shew who are your *Enemies*. 2. What *Designs* they have upon you. 3. Lay down those *Rules*, which if faithfully attended to, will disappoint your *Enemies*, and make, or continue you yet a happy People.

### I. *Englands Enemies.*

Some of your *Enemies* are so open and bare-faced, that the Darkest Night of *Politick Reserve* cannot hide them from your observance; others again, are so secret, and close, that the brightest day cannot sufficiently discover them, but whoever shall come under these ensuing Characters, you may warrantably set a mark upon them, as your inveterate and sworn *Adversaries*.

1. They that would flatter you into a belief, that there is no such thing as a *Design* upon you, as Men, and Christians, do really *Design* in both these *Interests* to undermine you; their Policy lies in making you *Secure* in your selves, that you may not be *Secure* from themselves; could they once sing you asleep, their Work were easie to cut your *Throats*; could they once lift you up to the *Pinacle of Presumption*, they would soon throw you headlong into *desperation*; and when they have once mounted you above a *reasonable Fear*, they would sink you below all comfortable *Hope*.

2. Especially they whose steeld *Impudence* has imboldened them to Arraign the *Justice* of the whole Nation, in denying that horrid and devillish Plot against *His Majesties Person*, the *Government*, and *Religion of the Land*: It is the glory of an *Artist* to conceal his *Art*; and the Master-piece of *Romish Plotters* to conceal their *Plots*: and whilst they would deliver notorious *Traitors* from deserved *Punishment*, would as readily expose *Loyal Subjects* to that which is undeserved.

3. Since *Parliaments* are our *Catholicon*, or *Universal Remedy* against *Universal* or *Catholicall Maladies*; you must conclude them *Enemies* to the Nations *Life*, who would remove the *Physicians* in that *Critical minute*, when the *Patient* must either speedily recover, or immediately dye. What you are then to judge of those *Evil Counsellors*, who advised the *Dissolution* of two *Parliaments* in one year, when we are sure there was never a year of more *Danger*, nor a *Parliament* of more ability to prevent it, is easie to determine, but not so easie to resolve, whether the loss of that *Excellent Law*, for a *Parliament* once in three years, or the having three *Parliaments* in one year, was the more pernicious to *England's Safety*?

4. If they who reproach your *Representatives*, do interpretatively reproach you whom they represent, you know amongst what sort of men to discover your *Enemies*. Such, who in their *Scurrilous Pasquils*, have loaded the most *Loyal*, *Zealous*, and *Wise Patriots*, with *Scandalous Language*, traduced their *Persons*, misconstrued their *Counsels*, fastened odious *Suspicions* of *Disloyalty* upon them, being outrageous against them; because they were able to rescue an *Innocent People* out of their *Unmerciful hands*.

5. In the same rank you must place those who by *subtile Artifices*, and finer *Sleights*, obstructed *Parliamentary Proceedings*: who by unseasonable and unreasonable insisting upon *Un-parliamentary*, *Un-prefidented Privileges*, did hinder those excellent *Bills* from passing into *Acts*, which had been the *Bulwarks* of the Nation against *Popery*; who by various, and secret *Methods* damm'd up the *Current of Justice*, that it could not reach the *Capital Offenders*, who triumph in their present *Immunity*, and the hopes of future *Indemnity*.

6. Forget not to put them into the *Black-bill*, who being intrusted by the Nation, to represent them in the former *Parliament*, basely sold themselves, their *Votes*, and You, for *Annual Pensions*, *Gainful Offices*, and can give you a reason too, why they have sold you, because they say, they first bought you: and 'tis but reasonable that they who purchased your *Votes* at the *Election* in the *Country*, should sell their own *Votes* in the *House*, and that at as dear rates as they can.

7. They whose stiffness and *Pride* would not yield to an accommodation amongst differing *Protestants*, who have begun, continued, fomented, and encreased *Divisions* amongst our selves, are the most effectual *Friends* to the *Popish*, and therefore *Enemies* to the *English Interest*; who, whilst they do obstinately persist in imposing unreasonable terms of *Union*,

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on, have advanced Disunion, weakened the hands of Friends, strengthened the hands of Enemies, and learn'd from *Machiavel* their Tutor, and the Devil their Father, to destroy effectually by dividing irreconcilably; and have laid such sinful terms of Peace, as have made Peace desperate, unless Dissenters could purchase a Peace with us at the dear rate of a War with God, wherein Conscience must always be in Arms, and the Soul the Seat of War.

8. Whoever have been Neutrals in this last grand Contest between the Protestant Religion and Popery, ought to be more than suspected for your Enemies: He that is not with us in extremity, is certainly against us; These only wait the good hour, when they may safely shew their Teeth, and bite, which now they hide.

9. There is none more implacably your Enemy, than that Person whose Interest it is to destroy you: They therefore that must neither eat nor drink, except you starve, that must go in Rags, except you go naked; are taught to fleece you, that they may keep themselves warm; I mean, as you easily know, the whole List of *Pensioners*, who sold you once to get Bread, and would gladly sell you once again that they may get Drink; they have betrayed us once, and thereby proved themselves Knaves; if they be trusted, and betray us again, we shall prove our selves Fools.

10. Whoever have their Dependance upon Foreign Princes or States, are under a strong Obligation to see you ruin'd: for your own Reason will tell you, that no Foreign Power will prodigally throw away his Pistols, where he expects not an Harvest answerable to his Seed: These are those Degenerated *Englishmen*, who having forsaken the Interest of their Native Countrey, have sold themselves to an Outlandish Interest, that they may the better gratifie their own Ambition, and those potent Lusts which their own meaner Fortunes could not otherwise feed and satiate.

11. Lastly, They that cry up Prerogative against the true Liberty of the Subject, are Enemies both to Prerogative and Liberty, and would swell up the one to the consumption of the whole; for when all the Spirits are drawn to one part, the rest must sensibly waste, for want of their due and proper Nourishment.

### II. What Design these our Enemies have upon us.

To know our Danger, and our Enemies Designs, is a good step to prevent the one, and disappoint the other: The Bird will perish without pity, that hastens to the Snare laid in her sight: let me therefore warn you of the Snare, and if you like it, put in your feet.

1. One great Design is to render Parliaments odious, and thereby useless; which they manage by representing our Representatives, as men of Faction, Seditious, Disloyal Spirits, and when they can say nothing more, turn us over to *Forty Two*, for a parallel: though some wise men have thought they were very imprudent in making the comparison; for if *Forty Two* had no other design than to secure the Protestant Religion, and our Civil Proprieties, as 'tis evident this of *Seventy Nine* had not, the Parallel will rather justify *That*, than condemn *This*.

2. What Design there may be of a Standing Army, I had rather any should speak than my self; but this is sure, a more accursed Design against our Peace and Propriety could not be formed, when every lowzy Red-coat shall pluck the Bread out of our Children's Mouths, and the Cloaths off our own Backs, when they are once hunger-bitten for want of Pay; and these must be *Lurdanes* in every House, and the Proprietor wait upon his Trencher. Whether *Danby* had any such Design upon us, will be seen in his Trial, though we want not frequent Trials that such a Design there is.

3. That there has been a Design to Corrupt all Elections, and Debauch the Members Elected, that so a Parliament, which in its Pure and Primitive Constitution is the best of things, may by Corruption, become the worst, is too clear from those Voluminous Lists of *Pensioners*, which, formerly, and of late, have given us our Information.

4. Though I would not have you Suspicious, yet I would have you Cautelous, and advise with your selves, whether there be not some Endeavours to make *Will* and *Pleasure* triumph over *Right* and *Law*? You may warrantably have a vigilant eye upon those who cry up an *Absolutely Absolute Power* in the Prince; That we are Vassals; That the Prince may Impose Taxes upon the Subjects, which they in Conscience are bound to obey, upon pain of Eternal Damnation: you may do well to take timely notice of this Design: Your *All is at Stake*, and that too great a Concern to be ventur'd upon an *After-Game*.

5. And your Religion seems to be in Apparent Hazard; which is more worth than all the rest; and that, for which all the rest are desirable. How difficult is it to get a Law pass, that may effectually barr out Popery, Experience has taught you: What Hopes *Papists* have of the *Succession*, you understand; and how to prevent that Blow to Religion, if the *Rampant Jesuits* should give a Blow to the Life of our present Sovereign, you cannot easily imagine.

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6. And who knows what Danger you are in of losing your Parliaments? These frequent Dissolutions, with some prognosticate an Annihilation; and then the Nation, whose Eyes are scarce dry from their Lamentations for their Short-lived Parliaments, must weep, as if it were but one great Eye, for the Funeral of our Ancient Government.

### III. The Means to prevent our Utter Ruine.

You are now (*Dear Countreymen!*) upon the Brink of the Brink of Ruine; and cannot be undone but by your own Choice: Let it not be said, when both are set before you, *You have chosen Misery before Felicity.*

1. Keep a tender Eye in your present Choice upon those Worthy Persons which answered the Trust Reposed in them the last Parliament; and where you find your selves mistaken (and in some you were sadly mistaken) rectifie your Errour, and let your *Second-Thoughts* compensate whatever Failing you were guilty of in your last Choice.

2. Be resolved (against all Temptations) to chuse no *Minors*: Can you judge them fit to dispose of your Liberties, Lives, Estates and Religion, who cannot legally dispose of their own Estates, or themselves? What Security can they give you, that they will not give away yours and you, whose Bond in the Eye of the Law will not be taken for Forty Shillings?

3. Set a black Brand upon those notorious *Pensioners* (now well known to all the World) who would sell their God, their King, their Countrey, for morsels of Bread: What Protection do you expect from them, who cannot shew their Faces with confidence, without a Protection, either in, or out of Parliament? Will you secure them within the Walls of the *House of Commons*, who were better secured within the Walls of the *Common Gaol*? Who can never pay their Debts contracted by their Prodigality, but out of your Purse; and must run you in, to get themselves out of their Mortgages?

4. Do not once think of opening your mouths for such as are not their own men; who are pre-engaged to their great Masters, and must follow their Whistle: Their Offices, Preferments, Salaries, Court-employments lie so near their hearts, that they have no room for their Countrey.

5. Suspect them who by Terrour and Threats would awe you, or by Bribery, Feastings, Entertainments would allure you to prostitute your Voices for their Elections; you may be assured they would never bid so high for your Suffrages, but that they know where to make their Markets. Chuse the worthy unwilling person, before the complementing unworthy man, whose extraordinary forwardness prognosticates he seeks not your Good, but his own, separate from the Publick.

6. Let not Beggars be your Representatives; they will cut large Thongs out of your Hides, to spare their own; 'tis a pleasure to them to become Levellers, and to make you as poor as themselves: How can they judge what is expedient for the Nation to spare, whose only care it is to get a piece of Money to spend?

7. Get men of Courage, who will not be Hector'd out of their Duties by the Frowns and Scowls of men: never had you more need to pitch upon the old *English Spirit*, that durst be faithful and just against all Temptations. 'Tis God's own Counsel, that you Elect men after his own heart, such as fear God, and not the Faces of Great ones. Remember who they were that could never yet resist Smile or Frown, but tamely sunk below their own Convictions, and knew the evil they did, yet durst not but commit it.

8. Set your eyes, fix your hearts upon persons of as large principles as the Gospel will warrant you. Narrow Souls that will own none but those that bear their own Image and Super-scription, will sooner raise Persecution at home, than secure us from Popery, and Invasion from abroad: The great Interest of *England* at this day, is, to tolerate the tolerable, to bear with the weak, to encourage the conscientious, and to restrain none but such as would restrain all besides themselves.

9. Make your Trust as easie a Burden as may be, to them you Elect. The Trust it self is Burden enough, the Charges of their Attendance great enough; and 'tis disingenuous to suffer them to sink in their Estates, who zealously endeavour to preserve you from sinking.

10. Lay Obligations upon those you chuse, that they labour to secure the *True Protestant Religion* for the future, that they examine the present Plot, pursue the Plotters, and impartially bring them to condign punishment, how high soever they look, and with whatsoever Supports they bear up their confident Faces: Let them be entreated also, when Grievances are redressed, Religion secured, the Nations Peace settled and stablished, liberally to supply the Government, to discharge Publick Debts, that there may be the most happy Closure between His Sacred Majesty and His People, that ever any Age could yet boast of.

These things being humbly laid before you, I shall join with you all in wishing a Happy Success to your Elections, and a Blessed Issue upon the Unanimous Counsels of your  
REPRESENTATIVES.

FINIS.